

*The Reasonableness of believing the Trinity,
and Incarnation of the Son of God, asserted.*

— A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D

At the Cathedral Church of St. *PAUL*,
March the 2d. 1701.

B E I N G

The *THIRD* for the Year 1702. of the *LECTURE*
Founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;

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Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *RICHARD SARE* at *Grays-Inn-Gate* in
Holbourn, MDCCII.

MONO

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1971-02-03

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I Cor. II. 12, 13, 14.

Now We have received not the Spirit of the World,
but the Spirit which is of God, that we might
know the things that are freely given us of God.

Which things we also speak not in the Words which
Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost
teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural Man receiveth not the things of the
Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him,
neither can he know them, because they are spiritu-
ally discerned.

MY First Discourse upon this Occasion having
asserted the Reasonableness of believing those
parts of the Christian Revelation, which Men
may find themselves unable fully to compre-
hend, and clearly to account for the Matter of: And
my Second having considered the Arguments usually al-
ledged in Bar to this Assertion: If what hath gone be-
fore have the Force I presume to be in it, the general
part of my Point is secured. And therefore now, accord-
ing to my Promise, I shall proceed to strengthen that
Assertion, by instancing in some Particulars of Faith
and Practice, which have been most wrongfully made to
the Jews a *Stumbling-block*, and reputed by the Greeks *Fool-
ishness*. The Articles of Faith I choose to speak to shall
be those so often mentioned already, The *Trinity*, The
Incarnation of the Son of God, and the *Satisfaction* made
for

See Sermon.

I. for

1702. Pag.

11, 12.

for the Sins of the World, by the Sacrifice of his Death. And the Points I shall speak to with Regard to them, are these Three;

I. *First*, That these Doctrines are delivered to us in the *New Testament*, Consequently, that they ought to be believed by *Christians*.

II. *Secondly*, I shall examine how far they are agreeable to the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, and the Sense of the antient Synagogue; Consequently, whether they be just Matter of Offence to the *Jews*.

III. *Thirdly*, I shall shew, That they contain nothing repugnant to the Principles of Natural Reason; Consequently, that they deserve not to be accounted *Foolishness* by the *Greeks*.

To prepare my way for the *First* of these Proofs, permit me to remind you of the *Third* Particular insisted on in my last Discourse; *viz.* That such a Liberty taken in expounding the Scriptures, as, (purely for the sake of bringing all that is there contained down to the Level of our own Capacities) departs from the plain and most natural Sense of the Text, is an Expedient neither Needful nor Lawful in the Case now under debate. Presuming then, as I hope I fairly may, that This is not now to be denied me; All that lies upon me is to produce some, (some only out of many) Passages of Scripture, which in their Literal and most Obvious Importance, do fully assert what the Christian Church holds in each of these Matters now proposed to your Consideration.

The Profession of Faith which We of this established Church do, in Agreement with all Orthodox Christians, make in the Doctrine of the Trinity, you have in these Words, (b) *There is but One living and true God -- And in Unity of this Godhead there be Three Persons, of one Substance, Power and Eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.*

(a) See
xxxix.
Articl. of
Religion
Art. 1.

In vindication of this Profession, I shall endeavour to shew;

1. That the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, are so distinguished from each other in Scripture, as justifies our believing them *Three Persons*.

2. That such Names and Properties and Operations are there attributed to them, as prove each of these Persons to be *truly God*.

3. That, all this notwithstanding, the Scripture is most express in the Unity of the Godhead, from whence it will follow, that these Three Persons are the *One living and true God*.

1. The Distinction between *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, is evident from these few plain Passages: In the Account of the Angel *Gabriel's* Conference with the Blessed Virgin, we find this Answer to her Question, how it was possible to become a Mother without the Knowledge of a Man, (c) *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee*, (c) *Lu. i. 34. 35.* and the Power of the highest shall overshadow thee, therefore (d) *Mat. ii. 16, 17,* also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. At the Baptism of this Holy Person we have a threefold (d) Testimony of the Spirit of God descending like a Dove and resting upon him, and a Voice from (e) *Joh. i. 32,* Heaven declaring him the Beloved Son of God. A little before his Passion, he makes this Promise to his Disciples, (e) *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth.* And again, When (f) the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the (f) *Joh. xiv. 16.* Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. St. Paul tells the Romans, (g) *If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the Dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the Dead, shall also quicken your Mortal Bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.* Can any thing

thing now be more manifest, than the Distinction made in the *First* of these Texts, between the *Holy Ghost* or that *Power of the Highest*, which should *over-shadow* the Virgin Mother of our Lord, the *Highest* whose *Power* that *Holy Ghost* is called, and that *Holy Thing*, which because born by Virtue of that Miraculous Impregnation, should for this Reason be called *the Son of God*? In the *Second*, we have the like Distinction between the *Holy Ghost* descending, the *Son* on whom he rested, and the Heavenly Voice attested to, and the *Father* whose Voice it was, and whose Son Jesus is declared to be: In the *Third* and *Fourth*, between the *Spirit* sent, abiding with the Disciples, proceeding from the Father and testifying of the Son; the *Son* departing, praying for him, sending him, and attested to by him; and the *Father* from whom he proceeds, and by whom he was sent upon that Son's Request: And in the *Last*, between the Person raising *Jesus* from the Dead, the Person raised, and the Spirit by which he was raised. To this we may add the (b) Form of Baptism, in the Name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*; the solemn Benediction which our daily Prayers borrow from the Apostle, when we beg, that *the Grace* (i) of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and *the Love of God*, and *the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost* may be with us all evermore. And, to name once for all, that remarkable Text of St. *John*, (k) *There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.*

(b) Mat.
xxviii. 19

(i) 2 Cor.
x. 14.

(k) 1 Joh.
v. 7.

That God the Father and the Son of God are different Persons, none who acknowledge the Scriptures, or but barely read them, should, one would think, dispute: But many have made a difficulty of allowing thus much concerning the Holy Ghost. And yet it seems very plain, that a real Diversity must needs follow, where Actions
and

and Relations altogether incompatible are affirmed; As *Begetting* and *being Begotten* make it not possible for us to conceive the same Person to be Father and Son both, in respect to the same Begetter and Begotten: And as little can *proceeding* and *being sent*, be reconciled with sending, and being proceeded from in One and the Same; which destroys the *Sabellian* Imagination of One only Person in God. And as this establishes a certain Difference between Father and Son, so whosoever shall consider the several Acts and Offices ascribed to the Holy Spirit, will find undeniable Reason to conclude, that He is likewise a Person, that is, that he hath a real Subistence, which by its Manner and Relation peculiar to himself differences him from the Other Two. For, though the Word Spirit be sometimes used in Scripture with a Latitude extending to Graces; and Gifts, Operations and Influences of God, yet many Texts cannot without the Greatest Violence be so understood as to mean no more than these. To *Sin against*, to *grieve*, to be *Baptised*, and *Blessed* in the Name of a mere Quality, or Energy, or Act, carries an Appearance of the greatest Absurdities. Since therefore the Scripture attributes to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, what We, for the better explaining what we mean in this Matter, take leave to call distinct Relations and personal Properties, because peculiar to One, and incommunicable to the Other Two; Since the Passages already laid before you, do evidently imply such a Diversity as results from those Properties and Relations; you will I hope agree, that we are justified by the Scriptures, in believing the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, to be *Three Persons*.

2. My next Step in this Argument is to shew, that the Names, and Properties, and Operations attributed to these Three in Scripture, are such as prove each of them to be God, or a Person truly Divine. Con-

Concerning the Father, here is no Controversy; My Business therefore is contracted into this, that the Titles and Marks incommunicable to any but the True God, are not in Scripture attributed to the Father only, but expressly applied to the Son and the Holy Ghost.

1. *First* then, (reserving those many other Passages which speak of the Son of God as incarnate, and under the Character of Jesus Christ) it shall suffice at present to observe, that the Author to the *Hebrews* declares the Son to be the *Brightness of his Father's Glory*, and the
- (*l*) Heb i. (*l*) *express Image of his Person*, a Ray or Effulgence of
 3. 4. 5. 6. 7 the Divine Light, of the same Substance with its Source;
 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. He sets him above the Angels, makes him the Object of their Adoration, and says that Excellence is expressed in the Name of Son, to whom the Father said, *This Day have I begotten thee*; He shews, that the Old Testament ascribed to him an Everlasting Throne, a Scepter of Righteousness, an Uction with the Oyl of Gladness, which gave him Preeminence above all that ever were anointed; And not only so, but gives the Name of God to the Son anointed, as well as to the Father anointing: And accordingly we find the same Divine Perfections affirmed of him; *Eternity*, where we read, that the (*m*)
- (*m*) Joh. v. 26. *Son hath Life in himself*; and, *They*, (that is, the Heavens and the Earth) *shall* (*n*) *perish but thou shalt endure*, *They shall be changed, but Thou art the Same, and thy Years shall not fail*. So is Omniscience, and equal Perfection of
- (*n*) Heb i. 11. 12. Knowledge, where it is said by the Son, *As the* (*o*) *Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: The Father loveth the Son and sheweth him all things that himself doeth*.
- (*o*) Joh. x. 15. v. 20. And, I am (*p*) *He which searcheth the Heart and Reins*. So is Equality of Power, and the like Freedom in the Use
- (*p*) Rev. ii. 23. of it; for *As the* (*q*) *Father raiseth up the Dead and quickneth them, even so the Son quickneth whom he will: and a-*
- (*q*) Joh. v. 21. gain,

gain, *What things soever the (r) Father doeth, these also (r) Job. v. doth the Son likewise.* So is the Creation of All things, ^{19.} For of the Son it is said, *By (s) whom he made the Worlds, (s) Heb. i. and to Him the Psalmist addresses thus, Thou, (t) Lord, in (t) Heb. i. the beginning hast laid the Foundations of the Earth, and (t) 10. the Heavens are the works of thy hands.* So is the continu- ^{Pf. cii. 25.} al Preservation of the Universe, for He it is that *uphold- eth (u) all things by the Word of his Power.* And lastly, ^{(u) Heb. i.} to Him Men are commanded to give equal Reverence ^{1.} with the Father, *For the (w) Father hath committed all (w) Job. v. Judgment to the Son, that all Men should honour the Son, 22, 23. even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent him.*

Now the Scriptures of both Testaments being written with a particular View of bringing Men off from the Notion and Worship of the Many False Gods to that of the One True God; is it not absurd to think, that they should so confound the Names and Attributes of this One true God, by ascribing them to any who by Nature is not God, as must utterly evacuate this great design, and, instead of abolishing, confirm and propagate Idolatry, with all who acknowledge their Divine Authority? I conclude therefore, that if Eternity and Immutability, Universal Knowledge and Almighty Power, If Creation and Providence, If the Homage and Adoration of Men and of Angels, are such Properties and Characters, as both Reason and Scripture agree to belong of Right to the True God only: Then to whomsoever these are expressly attributed in Scripture, that Person is truly and properly God. But the Texts already mentioned attribute these expressly to the Son: Therefore these Texts justify us in believing not the Father only, but the Son also to be God.

The same Inference we shall be abundantly warranted

B

to

to make concerning the Blessed Spirit, if the force of these following Places be duly considered. The Holy thing born of the Virgin was therefore called the Son (x) of God because it was of the Holy Ghost: which reason could not hold if the Holy Ghost were not a Divine Person. Ananias when lying to the Holy Ghost is charged with (y) lying not unto Men but unto God. St. Paul declares himself Separated to the Apostleship (z) not of Man neither by Man, but by the Commandment of God; And St. Luke, relating the manner of this Separation, says, that (a) while certain Prophets and Teachers of the Church at Antioch fasted and ministred unto the Lord, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the Work whereunto I have called them. The same Apostle to the Elders of Ephesus recommends the Care of the Church of God, (b) over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers. Isaiah's prediction concerning the hardening of the Jews, which by the Prophet is called the (c) Voice of the Lord, St. Paul calls the Speech of the Holy Ghost. That which concerns the Priviledges of the Gospel is by Jeremy introduced with, Behold the Days cometh saith the Lord (d) that I will make a New Covenant, &c. which the Author to the Hebrews terms the Witness of the Holy Ghost to the abolishing of the many Legal Sacrifices as Insufficient, and to the Perfection and Perpetuity of the One Evangelical Sacrifice. The Lord (e) is said to be that Spirit which brings Liberty, even that Lord to whom when the Heart of the Jews shall turn, the Veil shall be taken away: But the Apostle takes care to inform us, that all this is an Allusion to Moses's covering his Face when he came out from the Sanctuary and spoke to the People, and laying aside his Veil when he went in to the presence of the God of Israel. The Sanctity of Temples is derived from the more especial presence of God residing in those places

(x) Lu. i.
35.

(y) A& v.
314.

(z) Rom. i.
1, 2.

1 Cor. i. 1

Gal. i. 1.

(a) A& v.
xiii. 1, 2.

(b) A& v.
xx. 28.

(c) Isa. vi.
8, 9

Comp.
A& xxviii

25, 26.

(d) Jer.
xxxii. 33.

Comp.
Heb. x. 15,

16.

(e) 2 Cor.
iii. 13, 18.

comp.
Excd.

xxxiv. 29,

so 35.

places consecrated to his Worship; and Christians are called upon to consider, that they are (f) the Temple of God, an Habitation of God through the Spirit, that the Spirit of God dwelleth in them, nay that not their Souls only, but even their Bodies too are the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Against this Person unpardonable Sin (g) may be committed; To Him infinite Knowledge, (h) even of all the deep things of God, is ascribed, the same intimate Consciousness as the Spirit of each Man hath with the Secretest Thoughts of his own Heart: To Him the raising of the (i) Dead, to Him the Gift of Miracles, to Him the free disposal of all extraordinary and supernatural Graces whatsoever, for all these (k) worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every Man severally as he will. The Lord commanded when his People were blessed that His Name should be put (l) upon them; which the Jews understood of the incommunicable Name, and therefore their Superstition of not (m) pronouncing Jehouab had no place in the Sacerdotal Benedictions of the Assembly; and the Christians are bless'd by the Apostles in the Name of the Spirit (n) together with that of the Father and Son: And Reason Good, since by our Lords own Appointment we are solemnly dedicated to all Three (o) in the Sacrament of Baptism; and that in such manner and form, that were not all of them truly Divine and of equal Authority, a more flagrant instance of Impiety, and Sacrilege, and Creature Worship, could not be found among the rankest Pagans.

3. And yet it is no less evident in the Third place, that there neither are nor can be more Gods than One. This is the constant voice both of Reason and Scripture. The Lord our God is one (p) Lord, there is One God and there is none other but He, who for this Reason is frequently stiled the (q) Only true God. For the Belief of

(f) 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

vi. 19.

Ephes. ii.

20, 21, 22.

(g) Mat.

32.

(h) 1 Cor.

ii. 10, 11.

(i) Rom.

viii. 11.

(k) 1 Cor.

xii. 4-11

(l) Num.

vi. 27.

(m) Mai-

mon. more

Neruch. P.

1. Cap. lxi.

(n) 2 Cor.

xiii. 14.

(o) Mat.

xxviii. 19.

1 Cor. xii.

12, 13.

(p) Mar.

xii. 29, 32.

(q) Joh.

xvii. 3.

1 Tim. vi.

15. 16.

Jude 4.

this Rev. xv. 4.

(r) Jam. i. 19. this, Men (r) are commended, and in it the very Devils are said to consent. The Christian Doctrine is so far from intending to possess Men with any Notions to the contrary, that it takes care expressly to prevent them; and to affirm the belief of our Blessed Saviour's Divinity, perfectly consistent with that fundamental Article. For (s) 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. *though there be that are called Gods, whether in Heaven or in Earth, (as there be Gods many, and Lords many), yet to us, says the Apostle, there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and We in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and We by Him.* Nor will the Form of Baptizing into Three Persons warrant any such Inference, against Men who most solemnly profess One Lord, (t) One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all. And to alledge a greater Authority than even that of an Apostle, our Lord himself hath told us, *This is Eternal Life (u) to know Thee, that is, the Father the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.* But most express is that remarkable Text of St. John, *There are (w) Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are one.* Great pains have indeed been taken to wrest this last Weapon out of our Hands, but the appearance of its being Genuine is too strong to warrant our lightly giving it up. Not that the Cause would fall if this defence were taken away; for many other Texts deliver that by necessary Implication, which is here spoken in more peremptory Terms. All that ascribe the essential Perfections of the Godhead to the Son and the Holy Ghost admitting no other reconciliation, either with those other Passages which so fully assert the Unity of the Divine Essence, or with the Principles of Reason, to which Plurality of Gods is an insupportable Contradiction; than that of confessing, that each

each of those to whom the incommunicable Excellencies of the Godhead are ascribed must needs be God; yet so, that notwithstanding the different Characters by which they are represented to Us, or the different Relations they stand in to each other, this Godhead of them all is entirely, indivisibly, inseparably One.

II. The next Point to be treated of, which concerns the *Incarnation of the Son of God*, is so closely allied to This, by the many Scriptural Proofs which are a common Support to Both, that it will be highly expedient at least, if not absolutely needful for the Clearness and Brevity I design, to produce our Evidence for that also, before I go about to vindicate the Former from that Offence to *Jews* or *Greeks*, which it hath been so heavily taxed with giving.

Now the Substance of what we profess upon this Occasion is, that *The Son, (x) which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very* ^{(*) xxxix} *and eternal God of one Substance with the Father,* ^{Articl. Art. ii.} *took Man's Nature in the Womb of the Blessed Virgin, of her Substance; so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the Manhood, were joyned together in one Person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man.* Now this God-Man was known by the Name of *Jesus of Nazareth*, and by the Title or Character of *Messiah or Christ*: In which respects he was *Perfect Man, of the Substance of his Mother born in the World*; but in respect of that Nature which he had before he took ours to it, he existed before his Birth of the Virgin, before any other Creature, and though not as yet God-Man, yet even then *Perfect God of the Substance of his Father begotten before all Worlds.* Upon which Accounts we find him mentioned in Terms so very different, and particularly stiled in Holy Writ the *Son of God*, and the *Son of Man*, in a Sense most Significant and Peculiar to himself.

To

To this Truth those Texts already brought out of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* bear ample Testimony, wherein the *Second* and *Third* Chapters bring all the Glorious things said in the *First*, home to Jesus; (1) And whom the Author had before preferr'd to the Angels, he here sets as much above *Moses*, as a Son in his own House is Superiour to a Servant in another's House; nay, as the Builder of the House is more honourable than the House: to which this Inference is immediately subjoyned, *He that built all things is God*. This very Person, to whom he had ascribed Divine Essence and Titles, an everlasting and universal Kingdom, the Creation and Preservation of the World, he afterwards affirms to have been made for a small Season lower than the Angels; to have participated of the *same Flesh and Blood*, with those he came to Sanctify; to have taken the Seed of *Abraham*, and been *made like unto his Brethren in all things*. In like manner St. *John* begins his Gospel with a most accurate account of the *Word*, the Second of those *Three* which

(1) Heb. iii. 1-5, ii. 9, 11, 14, 16, 17. he says bear Record in Heaven; that this *Word* (2) was in the beginning, that it was with God, that it was God, and yet with God, that it made all things, and without it was not any thing made that was made, that this Word came into the World, had the Testimony of *John Baptist*, was made *Flesh*, dwelt among us; even *Jesus Christ*, whose proper Province it was to bring *Grace and Truth*, as that of *Moses* heretofore had been to give the *Law*. To the same purpose we have the *Word* of *Christ* himself, that he had *Glory* with (a) the Father before the World was, that he came (b) down from Heaven, and the Father, that his Ascension thither was only a returning to the place where he (c) was before, nay where he was at the very time (d) of his being upon Earth: that He is in the Father, and the (e) Father in Him that They who see Him,

(2) Joh. i. 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17. (a) Joh. xvii. 5. (b) vi. 51. (c) vi. 28. (d) iii. 13, 14. (e) xiv. 9, 10, 11.

see the Father, that He and the^(f) Father are One. He acknowledges himself the Son^(g) of the Blessed, he asserts his Existence antecedent to^(h) Abraham, in Terms that allude to God's revealing his Name to Moses, and plainly appear to be so understood by his Adversaries: He calls himself the First⁽ⁱ⁾ and the Last, a Title well known to belong to God alone; but to demonstrate that here the Father could not, But his Incarnate Son of necessity must be meant, after having said, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come; the Almighty; and again, I am the first and the last*, he adds such a Characteristick as is a sure Direction where alone these Words can be applied; For so it goes on; *I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for ever more, Amen, and have the Keys of Hell and of Death*. The Apostles accordingly speak of him in such a Style as will very hardly admit of any Ambiguity, such as, *The Lord (k) from Heaven, the Great (l) God, the True (m) God, the Only (n) Lord God, and Over (o) all God blessed for ever*. To Him are given the Essential Perfections of God, Omnipotence, (p) exemplified in rising himself and raising all the dead, by his own Power; in doing whatsoever the Father doth, and an ability to subdue all things to himself: Omniscience, exerted in *knowing (q) Mens thoughts, knowing all things*; Omnipresence implied in the promises (r) of hearing and answering the Prayers made to him in every place, and being with his Servants always, even to the end of the World. Universal Dominion, express'd by sitting at *God's right hand (s) till his Enemies are made his Footstool*, being Lord of all, and *having all things put under him*; In respect of this Humane Nature it is, that he is said to be exalted above all things in Heaven and Earth; 'tis this that after having * purged our Sins by his

(f) x. 30.
(g) Mar.
xiv. 61, 62.
(h) Joh.
viii. 58, 59.

(i) Rev. i.
8, 17, 18.

(k) 1 Cor.
xv. 47.

(l) Tit ii.

13.
(m) 1 Joh.
v. 20.

(n) Jude
4. comp.

2 Pet. ii. 1.
(o) Rom.

ix. 5.
(p) Joh. ii.

19. x. 18.
Phil. iii. 20,

21.
(q) Mat.

ix. 4.
Joh. ii. 24,

25 xvi. 30.
xxi. 17.

(r) Mat.
xviii. 20.

xxviii. 20.
(s) Heb. i.

13. 1 Cor.
xv. 27, 28.

Ast. ii. 36.
v. 31. x. 36.

Phil. ii. 9,
10, 11.

* Heb. i. 3.
1 Pet. iii.

22. Rev. v.
12, 13.

his Blood, fate down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; This with regard to which he is *gone into Heaven*, Angels and Principalities and Powers being made subject unto him, and Blessing and Honour and Worship, and Thanks offered to this Lamb that was Slain, for ever and ever. So vast and manifest a difference there is between that Presence of the Divinity, by which God is said to be in any other Prophet or Holy Person, a Transient and Occasional Presence only; and that fixt Residence and indissoluble Union by which (t) *all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus Christ bodily.*

In a Word, whatever hath already been urged for the Divinity of the Son of God is by virtue of his Personal Union with our Nature true of the *Man Christ Jesus*: Who when in *the form* of the meanest *Servant* (u) was still as truly in *the form of God*, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. An Evidence as full as Words could well express, such as seems to require a very labour'd perverseness to misinterpret; More, much more than they who have most studiously misinterpreted are able to set aside; either by making their own Novel and false Glosses at all of a piece with the general strain of Scripture, or by furnishing one substantial Reason against that natural Construction, which the Words at first view offer, and the Faithful of all Ages have so readily gone into.

However, that I may not seem insensible or negligent of, nor You be unprovided for the Objections, which some among our selves (the more the Shame and Pity) have very industriously heaped together against either the Texts here produced, or those to the same effect which I am obliged to pass by; In stead of examining and exposing each little Evasion in particular, it shall suffice at present to lay down Two or Three general Reflections

lections, which may shew the Reasonableness of receiving such Passages in their Natural and most Obvious Signification, and the Vanity of all those miserable shifts and subterfuges, which draw after them a train of as gross and detestable Consequences, as any of those imaginary Ones, which they are pretended to be called in for necessary remedies against.

I. *First* then, The Importance of any Doctrine and our Obligation to embrace it we cannot better judge of, than by the Frequency, the Solemnity, and the Variety of Methods made use of for inculcating it. Let us see then how far this appears to be the Case of the Articles now under Consideration. Had the Son and Holy Spirit been once or twice, and as it were casually, mentioned in Terms capable of giving some Countenance to the belief of their Divinity, the Sense of these Texts might have been left to be Governed by the more general Current of Scripture. Had they the Names of *God* and *Lord* attributed often to them, but no where those adorable Perfections, which Reason and the Word of God do both agree in Affirming of the true God only; It being out of all dispute, that those Names are sometimes to be understood in an improper and figurative Sense, much might have been alledged for softening the supposed harshness of such Expressions, by taking refuge in *Catachreses* and *Metaphors*. Nay, on the other Hand, had those Perfections been somewhere ascribed to them, but the Names and Titles peculiar to God no where; Reverence, and Modesty, and a becoming holy Jealousy for His Honour, who hath declared himself so very jealous of his own, might have restrained us from the boldness of daring to place the Name of God on Them, to whom Inspired Writers (for substantial Reasons as might be piously presumed) had set us no pattern for giving it.

C

it. But now, when this appears to be the constant Language of God's Word; When every Writer, and every Book of the New Testament speak it so very familiarly, and without any reserve apply to the Son both before and after his Incarnation, and to the Blessed Spirit, Titles peculiar to God alone: When the most literal import of those places is justified by the Divine Excellencies affirmed of Them no less than of the Father: Men who are not exceeding captious, will, I should think, be very apt to conclude, that the Doctrines I have been contending for are not only very warrantable and well supported, but necessary to be entertained and stedfastly adhered to. For sure the Apostles would not have taken so many several ways for establishing them, and for obviating the Scruples and Prejudices that Men's own Minds might suggest against them, were not these Articles Essential parts of that Religion, which Christians (as such) profess, and ought to distinguish themselves by.

2. *Secondly*, Those of our Adversaries, who heartily agree with us in the Divine Authority of Scripture, hold this, as we do, for the true Rule and Measure of a Christian's Faith, and say it is a Method of Instruction designed for all Conditions and Capacities of Men. If so, 'tis reasonable sure to think, that Care is taken to express Matters of the highest Consequence, as plainly as the Subject would bear: Consequently, that either the Letter should not be forsaken, unless some Circumstances, either in the Context or the Nature of the thing spoken of, gave such warning for it, as might be visible and sufficient to Readers of common Understanding and Attention; Or else, that where no such warning appears, Men should not be trapp'd into any dangerous Error by sticking to the plain and natural Construction. But here we find it directly otherwise..

Let

Let us suppose, as naturally we must, that the Letter of these Scriptures would incline the generality of Readers, to think the Son and Holy Ghost God, and to Worship Them together with the Father. Admit now the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation to be false, and what is the Consequence of this Opinion and Practice? No less than down-right Idolatry; That very Idolatry which God all along took such care to extirpate. For this did not consist in not worshipping the Supreme God, but in worshipping Others together with Him, who were by *(w)* Nature no Gods. At this then the Old Testament was principally levell'd, that the People of God should have no other Gods, besides, or before, or together with Him: At this the New, to *turn* the Gentiles *(x)* also from Idols to serve the living and true God. The governing Intention of both Testaments is the same: Only they represent the same God under different Characters, according to the different Oeconomies they were appointed to serve: His Stile in the Old is the Lord God of Israel, In the New, The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: But still the Design of both is utterly evacuated, if the Son and Holy Ghost be not by Nature God, but the Father only be so; and yet the Language of the New Testament do naturally carry us to own and worship Them as such, together with the Father.

(w) Gal. iv. 8.

(x) 1 Cor. xii. 1, 2. 1 Thes. i. 9.

Let us see then whether any Provision hath been made against so dangerous an Errour, as the Literal Construction, upon this Supposition, must involve Men in. Were they sufficiently warn'd against this Sense by other Texts of Scripture, which inculcate the Unity of the Godhead? This could not be; because those of the New Testament as well affirm the Unity of the Godhead as the distinction of the Persons: And consequently, if the Word of God be not inconsistent with it self, The acknowledgment of

Three Divine Persons cannot be inconsistent with the Acknowledgment of One God, and no other but Him. Christ then by saying that *He and the Father are One*, and St. John. that the *Father the Word, and the Holy Ghost are One*, remove all Scrupulous Fears of owning Three Persons, lest in so doing we should own Three Gods: and shew that there is no necessary, no manner of Consequence from the Former of these to the Latter.

Nor are the Methods of Construction advanced by our Adversaries, and the Grounds they proceed upon, a sufficient Warning for this purpose. For these, consisting chiefly in Critical Niceties of Articles, and Pointings, Metaphorical Creations, or Strained Figures, are too full of Subtlety and Artifice for the Vulgar to understand. I appeal then to any sober Judgment, whether it was the part of Prudent (not to say Divinely inspired) Writers, to express themselves so, as must defeat the great Aim of all revealed Religion, if their Words be taken in their most natural Sense; Whether it was the part of Fair and Honest Writers, who wrote to Men of all Conditions, to do it so as must ensnare the much greater part of their Readers in Creature-Worship, the greatest of all Impieties: Whether that ought to be allowed, as a Good Objection against what they literally and frequently and professedly own which they at the same time literally frequently and professedly disclaim: In a Word, Whether, in a point of such mighty Importance, their true Sense can be supposed to turn upon such foreign and little Niceties, as can be no preservative against Idolatry to the Many unlearned who cannot understand them; and are so wretchedly trifling, as instead of Satisfying are apt only to provoke Indignation and Contempt in the (comparatively) few Learned that do.

3. This is the rather to be insisted on, because I observe

serve, *Thirdly*, that all their Evasions have not yet got over the Difficulties they find themselves press'd with from those places, which give Command (y) or Example (y) Joh. xiv. 14. xv. 7. his Hearing and Granting Men's Prayers; Or that direct all Men to Honour the Son even as they Honour the Father. Mat. xviii. 20. And therefore to justify our Compliance in these Matters a new Distinction hath been brought to our Relief. Joh. v. 23. Lu. xxiv. 52. The Exaltation of our Blessed Lord, and the Glorious Recompence made his Humane Nature, by seating it on the Throne of God, and commanding every Knee to bow before it, is made the Ground of our Adoration. Act. vii. 59. &c. But how? Not (as the Truth is) that his Humane Nature hath a right to this by its inseparable Union with the Divine (which in Christ Glorified is the strict and proper Object of our Worship) but (according to this new Scheme) without acknowledging any thing in him truly and naturally Divine, the pretended mere Man *Christ Jesus* is made a God by Office and Dignity; and a Creature, in consideration of Exemplary Obedience, is promoted to a Right of receiving that Homage and Duty, which hath generally been esteemed the incommunicable Prerogative of the Great Creator alone. Thus do these zealous Champions for the Unity of the Godhead destroy what they go about unduly to preserve: They advance an Expedient, which if true, would make the New Testament lay the same Foundation for Idolatry with that of the Pagan Theology, which Deified Men for their extraordinary Merits; They unluckily Split upon real for the sake of avoiding imaginary Absurdities; and, to deliver themselves from Doctrines above Reason, impose such as are most palpably contrary to Reason. Certainly this is not to assert the Purity of the *Christian*, but to strike at the very Root of *Revealed*, nay even of *Natural* Religion.

4. Give me leave to observe, *Fourthly*, that, if the Arguments brought against the literal Meaning of those Texts which declare for the Divinity of our Saviour prove any thing at all, they prove a great deal too much; and that which their Bringers can neither ward off, nor will be content to abide by. It greatly strengthens our Interpretation, that those with whom our Lord convers'd understood his Words then, exactly as we do now. His calling God Father they (z) interpreted a making himself equal with God; At his saying before (a) *Abraham was I am*, they immediately took up stones to cast at him; So did they again, for that other saying *I and my Father are one*; the meaning of which in their Apprehension they declare to be making (b) *himself God*, and the design of Stoning him, that they might punish the supposed Blasphemy he was guilty of in it. And to mention no more, his Acknowledgment, when adjured by the High Priest, that he was *the Christ, the Son (c) of the Blessed* is reputed a Blasphemy so rank and notorious, as superseded all farther need of Witnesses, and drew on an unanimous and immediate Sentence, that he was guilty of death. So little it seems did it enter into the Heads of any who then heard him, that no more was intended by his being *the Son of God* than being so merely by Office and Adoption, or by being *before Abraham* than only in the eternal Decree of God to send him; or *One with the Father*, but by Consent: Which certainly are very innocent Meanings, such as They must be very Malicious indeed that could take Offence at, such as any other Good Man might say the same Words in as well as Jesus, and neither dishonour God nor displease Men.

○ But how does our Lord behave himself while under these Imputations? For they are of such a Nature, as neither Modesty, nor Prudence, nor Piety will suffer a Man

(z) Joh.v.
17, 18.

(a) Joh.
viii. 58, 59

(b) Joh.x.
30, 31, 32,
33.

(c) Mar.
xiv. 61, 62,
63, 64.

to continue under, if he can fairly clear himself of them: Does he tell them *they daily mistook his Words*, and therefore *contrived to do him Evil*? Does he at any time retract what he had said, or explain it to a Different Sense? No. He does once * indeed decline a direct Answer by alledging the Examples of others sent by God, upon whom their own Scriptures had bestowed the Title of Gods; yet so as in no Degree to quit his claim to the utmost they conceived his Words to import. He suffers his Disciples to call and think him such a Son of God as the Jews abhorred him for pretending to be; He frequently repeats such professions himself; He persists in them to the last; He makes them upon Oath, when it was least of all fit to Equivocate, or to reserve any secret Meaning different from the Magistrate's Sense that adjured him: He knew the Consequence of all this must be, that they who believed these Declarations would own him and Worship him as God, and they who did not would detest him as an Impostor.

* Joh. x.

Suppose now, that Christ was not truly God, what shall we say for a Conduct so amazing? What for a Notion yet more amazing than a Person of this unparalleled Presumption and most Sacrilegious Impiety, should be adopted by God, and attain Divine Honours for his Humility, and Meekness, and Piety, a most Exemplary Life, and voluntary suffering a most injurious Death. Assuredly there is no Medium, but Jesus Christ is either truly God, or he was, (what I tremble but to repeat, and what they who give the Occasion ought much more to tremble to hear) the most presumptuous and prophane, the last and most detestable of Men. And we should be very hard put to it to prove any such thing as a Divine Revelation; could we suppose it possible for God to give such Testimony as he did to *Jesus*, so far above the Works that any other Man had done, were

not

not his Declarations of this kind strictly and literally true: For, upon other Terms, he was unquestionably the most dangerous Seducer of the People, and the boldest Invader of God's Honour and Prerogative, that ever yet attempted upon Mankind.

It must then be allowed, I think, by all who consider things justly, that the Jews who accused and crucified, and to this day continue to revile our Blessed Lord as a Blasphemer, and the Gentiles who refuse him as an Impostor, do act at least more consistently with their own Principles; than They who name themselves after him, profess to revere his Doctrine for Divine, call him the best of Teachers and of Men, and yet wrest his Words to such a Sense, as quite destroys these fair Pretences by Consequences that seem unavoidable. Did *Paul* and *Barnabas* at *Lystra* fall into the utmost confusion, when the People went about to worship them? Did the Angel forbid *St. John's* doing it to Him, and bid him reserve that Honour for God? And did *Jesus* suffer, encourage, command, and promise to reward it? If he were Man only, this could not entitle him to a Reward so great from a God who hath so solemnly declared he will not give his Glory to another. Let our Adversaries be of a piece then, and either own him that very God which they are so loath to confess; or not allow him to be that excellently Good Man, which nothing but Obstinacy and Blindness can, and yet their own Methods seem to make it so necessary for Them to deny.

It is however certain, that how consistently soever with their own Principles those *Jews* and *Gentiles* who never received Christ and his Gospel may seem to have acted, in rejecting the Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation; yet have they by no means been consistent with the Truth. Nor indeed so with their own Principles

ples throughout, if that be true which I am now going to allege, as a Reason why those Articles were very wrongfully made a *Stumbling-block* not to be got over by One, and accounted *Foolishness* by the Other.

To begin then with the Jews, The Intimations of these Matters, which they seem to have had before the Preaching of the Gospel, and the exact Agreement of the Gospel with those Notions which that People either actually had, or might with due Attention have attained, when these Doctrines were first published among them. And First as to the Trinity.

(1.) One Intimation of this kind hath been thought the manner of the Old Testament so frequently expressing (d) God by a Noun, or Attributes in the Plural, joined with a Verb in the Singular Number. Which, though the Jews rightly alledge as a Mark that we are not from thence to infer more Gods than One, yet some have supposed it a fair hint for inferring more Persons in God than One. That this is not a necessary form of Speech, they think, appears from the singular Noun being used in (e) these very Books: And that there is somewhat more in it than a mere Idiom of the Hebrew Tongue, they have been induced to think the Jews have formerly allowed, from that Gloss of one of their Rabbies, upon the first Words of *Genesis*. *Bara Elohim*, If it were *not thus written* (says he) *it could not be Lawful for us to express our selves in this Manner*. They call this form indeed a Confutation of the Hereticks (meaning thereby the Christians) But this proceeds upon a false Presumption, that by owning and Worshipping Three Persons in God, we destroy that Unity of Essence, which our Religion maintains as constantly as their Own, and professes to believe the same God, the God of *Israel*, and none other than Him.

(d) Gen i.

1. xx. 13.

Dent. v. 26.

Josh. xxiv.

13.

Job xxxv.

10.

Pf. lvi. 12.

cxlix. 2.

Isa. lv. 5.

Jer. x. 10.

Or.

(e) Deut.

xxxii. 15,

17.

(f) Raym.

Mart. Pulp.

Fid. p. iii.

Dist. 1.

Cap. 3.

Sect. 2.

* Gen. i.
26. iii. 2.
xi. 7.
Iſa. vi. 8.

(g) See
Hornbeck.
contr. Ju-
deos. (in
answer to
Menaf. Ben
Iſrael Con-
ciliat. on
Queſt. vi. in
Genes.) Lib.
v. c. ii. pag.
379 to
390.
(h) Gen.
xix. 24.
Pſal. xlv. 7.
Pſal. cx. 1.
Zech. ii.
10, 11.
(i) Mai-
mon more
Nevoch.
Par. i.
Cap. lxi.
Menaf.
Conciliat.
in Exod.
Qu. iii.

Such Intimations again thoſe Texts have been lookt up-
on to be, where God is introduced ſpeaking in ſuch Forms
as theſe ; * *Let us make Man in our own Image, the Man is
become as one of us. Let us go down and confound their Speech,
Whom ſhall I ſend, and Who ſhall go for us?* The common
Solution whereof, by ſaying that theſe forms are either
directed to the Creatures, or to the Angels, or are a Stile
proper to Maſteſty, being thought inſufficient, and liable
to many and great Objections (g) which the time will
not ſuffer to be here particularly inſiſted upon.

Such likewise are thoſe Other, where Mention is made
of God more than once in the ſame Text and under diffe-
rent Capacities; as (h) *Jehovah raining down Fire upon So-
dom from Jehovah*, God anointing, and God anointed, *The
Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou on my right hand: Jeho-
vab ſending, and Jehovah ſent*, with ſundry others of the
like Nature. Thoſe of the laſt form are the more con-
ſiderable, becauſe the Learned Jews have acknowledged,
that, though the other Names of God may be and are
ſometimes allowed to Creatures, becauſe derived from his
Works, or ſuch Exce'lencies as are communicable: yet
that of Jehovah (i) is peculiar to God alone, becauſe this
denotes his eternal and neceſſary Exiſtence. Which by
the way is a Rule not eaſy to be reconciled with the
Practice of interpreting thoſe Scriptures of mere An-
gels, who call themſelves *Jehovah*; becauſe they are
ſtill Creatures and no more, however for that time pre-
tended to ſuſtain the Character of Him by whom
they are ſent. An Embaſſador, though ſpeaking in
the Name and repreſenting the Perſon of his King,
would not be more preſumptuous and abſurd in taking
to himſelf the Enſigns and Titles peculiar to Royalty;
than the moſt excellent of Creatures may ſeem to be in
aſſuming a Name, which (according to this Rule) is as
in-

incommunicable as the Nature and Self Existence it denotes, and can be allowed to none but Him, who is truly and strictly God.

It hath been farther observed, that the *Holy Spirit* is mentioned in the Old Testament as a Person; As when he is said to *speak by the Prophets*, * to *send the Messiah*, and the like. And that some learned Jews have understood the beginning of *Genesis* in this Sence, (k) One of whom in great Authority expounds the *Spirit of God* which *moved upon the face of the Waters*, not by *Air* or *Wind* as others have done, but by saying, that this is the *Spirit of the Messiah the King*, as it is said in *Esaiah*, *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him*: And another (l) calls it, *The Throne of Glory standing on the Air or Void Space, and brooding on the Face of the Waters by the Spirit of his Mouth, that is of the Holy Blessed God, and by his Word, as a Dove sits brooding upon the Nest.*

Once more, The same hath been supposed yet more fully intimated, by several places where the name of God (m) is thrice repeated; as also by the Doxology of the (n) Seraphim in *Isaiah*, which the Spirits before the Throne in *St. John's Revelation*, and which we daily sing in the Liturgies of the Christian Church. Upon which an antient Jew (o) is said to have left us this Comment, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabbath*; That is, *The Father Holy, the Son Holy, the Spirit Holy.* Nor will this seem so very strange, if those Names of God mentioned by *Maimonides*; The Name of *Twelve*, and that of *Two and Forty Letters* be truly accounted for by *Galatinus*. That Jew himself confesses they consist of several words, and contain so much of Mystery, that they were communicated not to all promiscuously; but only to such as were modest among the Priests, because some rash Men by mistaking them had from thence taken Occasion

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.
Ila. xlviii.
16. lxi. 1.
(k) Ber. Rabb. cir.
apud Ray. Pug. Fid P.
iii. Dist. 1.
C xi. S. 9.
Galatin L. 11. C. 6.
Horn. L. v. C. 2. pag. 397.
(l) R. Sal. Farch. in loc.
(m) Deut. vi. 4.
Psal. lxviii. 6, 7.
Jer. xxxiii. 2.
Dan. ix. 19, &c.
(n) If. vi. 3.
Rev. iv. 8.
(o) See Joh. Gerhard. Loc. de tri. Elohim. C. iii. Judgm. of Jewish Church. Ch. xi. See Gal. Arc. Cath. Verit. L. ii. Cap. x. xii.
2 Maim. More Nev. P. 1. C. lxii.

to corrupt the Principles of their Faith; whereas they were intended to lead Men to the true Knowledge of the Essence of the Blessed God. These Names he mentions as of great Antiquity, and says, that *from the Death of Simeon the Just*, his Brethren the Priests left off to bless by the Name *Jehovah*, and bless'd the People in the Sanctuary with the Name of Twelve Letters: but finding the ill use presumptuous and perverse Men made of This, they contrived to mutter it over, so as that the standers by should not hear distinctly what they said. And this Name I say, if *Galatinus* tell us true is, *Ab-Ben, Ve Ruah Kadosh*; that is, *Father Son and Holy Spirit*; Which consists of so many Letters in the Hebrew, And may very well bear the Reflections of *Maimonides* upon it; Both for the Abuse of it to the Opinion of Three Gods by rash Men, and for its being substituted into the Form of Benediction to explain the Threefold Repetition of *Jehovah* in that Form (*r.*) left them by *Moses*.

(*r.*) Num.
vi. 23, 24,
25, 26, 27.

I would not lay more weight upon these (which I have therefore chosen to call) Intimations, than they will fairly bear; though methinks they do not deserve to be altogether neglected. But in what follows next concerning *the Incarnation of the Son of God* we have much firmer Ground to go upon. And here my Business shall be to set before you some Passages of the Old Testament, undoubtedly belonging to the *Messiah*, and speaking of Him as Very God, which are expressly attributed to Jesus

(*s.*) Ps. lii. 7.
x. v. 6, 7.
cii. 25.
Compans
Heb. i. 4.
sq. 10.

in the New. Such are, *Thou (*s.*) art my Son this day have I begotten thee, Thy Throne O God is for ever and ever, O God thy God hath anointed thee, Thou Lord hast laid the Foundations of the Earth*, all attributed to our Blessed Saviour by the Author to the *Hebrews*, with a purpose to prove him in Nature and Dignity superior to the Angels. Such is the *cxxxv* Psalm applied to Christ by the

the (t) same Author and by Jesus himself; Such the Third (t) Heb. i. of Malachi where Jehovah is said to come to his Temple, 13. Mat. xxii. confessed by the Jews to predict the Messiah, and applied to Jesus (u) by himself, St. Mark, and the Father of (u) Mat. 41 to 45. John the Baptist. St. John acquaints us, that the Word was made (w) Flesh, and that this Word was God, before it was made Flesh: and it is worth our while to mark the Agreement between the Antient Paraphrasts of the Old, and the Writers of the New Testament in this particular. Those say, The World (x) was made by the Word of God, St. John, that All things were made by the Word, and without him was not any thing made that was made: And to take away all Ambiguity, with regard either to the Person or the Nature of the Creation there spoken of; St. Paul is express, that By Him (the Son of God) were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth; visible and invisible; whether they be Thrones or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by him and for him. The Paraphrasts say, God made (y) a Covenant between Abraham and his Word, St. Paul, that this Covenant was confirmed of God in Christ. They say, the Israelites murmured (z) against the Word, St. Paul, that they tempted Christ, when they were plagued with fiery Serpents. It was Jehovah the only true God's (a) Glory which Isaiah says he saw in his Vision, St. John affirms this to be the Glory of Christ, To Jehovah David very devoutly commends his (b) Spirit, so does our Blessed Saviour upon the Cross to the Father; But the same Act of Devotion is performed to that Crucified Saviour by St. Stephen, and the Text hath expressed it very emphatically, They stoned Stephen calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. The Lord Jehovah says in Zechariah, They (c) shall look on me whom they have pierced; St. John applies this Prophecy directly to Christ's dead

13. Mat. xxii.

41 to 45.

(u) Mat.

xi. 10.

Mat. i. 2.

Lu. i. 76.

(w) Joh. i.

1, 2, 14.

(x) Onkel.

in Deut.

xxx. 27.

Joh. i. 3.

Col. i. 16.

(y) Onk. in

Gen. xvii.

7.

Gal. iii. 17.

(z) Num.

xxi. 5, 6.

1 Cor. x. 9.

(a) Is. vi.

Joh. xii. 41.

(b) Psal.

xxxi. 5.

Lu. xxiii.

46.

Act. vii. 59.

(c) Zech.

xii. 10.

Joh. xix.

34, 37.

dead body wounded with a Spear. It is the *Lord of Hosts* foretold by *Isaiah* (d) to be to some a *Sanctuary*, but for a *Stone of Stumbling* and a *Rock of Offence* to the Houses of Israel and the Inhabitants of Jerusalem: the same which is elsewhere called a *precious Corner Stone*, a *sure Foundation* to them that believe. And both these Prophecies are jointly interpreted of Christ by the concurrent Authority of St. Peter and St. Paul.

It is with great Propriety, and a peculiar Elegance; that the Word is said by St. John (a) *σκηνοῦν ἐν ἡμῖν*, to dwell among, we say, it seems rather to pitch his Tabernacle in, Us; and that Men are said to have beheld his Glory, and again, that Jesus himself calls his Body a Temple. All which no doubt allude to the Jewish Tabernacle and Temple, which as (the Epistle to the Hebrews argues) was (like the rest of that Ritual Institution) a Type of Christ. The *Shekinah* or Emblem of a Divine presence residing upon the Figure thus representing the real Indwelling of the Divinity, (the Glory whereof was beheld) in the Body of the Word made Flesh: which Body was the Substance shadowed by that Figurative Tabernacle and Temple.

Such is the Agreement between the Texts of the Old and New Testament, but whether there were the like Agreement between the then Synagogue and the Christian Church with Relation to the Sense of those Texts, may be still a Question, for the resolving whereof, so far as is necessary for our present purpose, I would offer these following Considerations.

First, I would refer you to the Arguments urged here in a former * Discourse, to prove, that the Writers of the New Testament did not, durst not, cannot reasonably be imagined, as matters then stood, to cite the Jewish Scriptures in a Meaning, or to apply them to any Person

* Lectures
for 1701.
Serm. viii.

son or Thing, other than their Adversaries agree they were intended for, and might with fair and due Attention be satisfied they were properly applicable to.

Secondly, In such a controversy as this, where the Scarcity of antient Jewish Authors will not furnish us with positive and direct Proofs, it seems very reasonable to form a Judgment upon probable Presumptions.

Now, *Thirdly*, Such a Presumption I take this to be, that the Evangelists expressed themselves in such Terms and Sense, as were familiar and well understood at that time. Particularly, that when St. *John* spoke of the *Word* as a Person, this was not Language new or uncouth among the Jews of his days. That Gospel is generally allowed to be written in confutation of the *Cerinthian* and *Ebionitish* Heresy: Now *Cerinthus* and *Ebion* were Zealous Asserters of the Jewish Law, as well as opposers of our Lord's Divinity; But this last Error was what St. *John* principally set himself against. And when he begins his confutation of it, by saying that the *Word* was in the beginning, that it was with God, that it was God, and that it was made *Flesh*: What can we think this could avail, if those Judaizers had not the same received Notion of the *Word* with that he plainly had of it? Especially, how can we suppose this was not a general Notion, when we find such common use made of it in those *Chaldee* Paraphrases, whose Authority seems to be had in such Veneration by the Jews, and their Expositions to have been written so near the Date of St. *John's* Gospel? It appears to me much more credible, that the Evangelist adapted his Expressions to the then current Language of the *Jews*, than to any Platonick or Philosophical Scheme, which was so much more foreign to the Occasion of his Writing, when he had Zealots for the Law of *Moses* to deal with.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Whereas it hath been suggested, that the Authors who are alledged to speak in favour of these Mysteries are Spurious and Forged, written by Jews by Birth perhaps, but not by Religion, it seems but reasonable that some other Proof should be brought of this, besides their Modern Countrymen not owning or valuing them. They are not Adversaries of so much Candour, to esteem any Writer who hath dropp'd any thing in favour of Christianity. These Authors seem to be too numerous to be all forged: And it is no strange thing for Men in Error sometimes to stumble unawares upon, or be overborn by the Force of Truth. But it were a short way indeed of ending Controversies, if every Testimony should pass for forged which makes against Men, and this upon the word of them it makes against.

Fifthly, A greater Difficulty is the unanimous Opposition now made by this People against these Articles; All of them disclaiming either a Personal Distinction in God, or any more than a mere Man in their expected *Messiah*. Not All, if the Books quoted by Christian Writers be Genuine; But general, 'tis own'd, this Opinion is: And how such a general Defection should be from their former Principles, (if these were ever so) is not (it is confessed) easy to be accounted for, without any visible Footsteps of its Beginning and Progress, or any Opposition to it appearing. But the Case seems to have been the same too with regard to the Sufferings of the *Messiah*. Yet these were fully signified by the Prophets, (f) *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to Suffer, How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets*, are we know frequently in our Saviour's Mouth. Now it seems very difficult to conceive, that the antient Synagogue never took the

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(f) Luke
xxiv. 46.
Mat. xxvi.
54.

Predictions of this Matter in their true Meaning, and yet it was thought in our Saviour's time a good Answer to the Signification of his own Death, *We have heard out of the Law, that Christ abideth ever, (g)* and how sayest^(g) Joh. xii. 32. *thou, the Son of Man must be lifted up?*

But to return, When the High Priest asks *Jesus* whether he were the *Christ, the Son of the Blessed*, the latter of these Phrases seems to say that the *Messiah* was expected to be such; nay such in a Sense that our Saviour was condemn'd of Blasphemy for affirming himself so to be. Which how it could agree with any meaning but that of the Son of God, so as to be more than Man, or how they could have thought a Person whom they really believed the *Christ* a Blasphemer for styling himself the Son of God, is not I conceive, easy to apprehend. It seems then probable to me, I own, that the Jews did then expect such a *Christ* as would be the Son of the Blessed strictly speaking; and that *Jesus* was adjudged Guilty of Blasphemy for assuming a Title, which they who denied him to be the *Christ*, thought it the highest and most sacrilegious Impiety in him to pretend to: And for foretelling that he would one day *come in the Clouds of Heaven*, in a manner which the Prophet *Daniel* ^(b) had foretold, and as they understood the true *Messias* should do. And if this be so, the great imperceptible Change which hath matter of Fact in One of these Articles, cannot be a good Argument for not believing the like in the Other. ^{(b) Dan. vii}

6. Further yet, Though no such Sense of the Antient Synagogue could be proved Satisfactorily, yet if there were at least such Intimations of these Doctrines in the Old Testament, as, when brought to a right Apprehension of by the preaching of the Apostles, they might then, (though they did not before) perceive the Truth

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and Congruity of these Doctrines by: This were enough for the main thing I am contending for. It being evident, that those Articles cannot justify our Infidelity, which when seen by a clearer Light, and revealed more expressly, are so far from contradicting, as rather to illustrate what we knew before. Now the very sparing Discoveries of these Mysteries in the Old Testament might (very likely) be calculated for that Peoples weakness; and particularly for their great proneness upon all Occasions to Idolatry. And therefore Three Persons in one Divine Substance, and a God in Humane Flesh, were Truths reserved for the fulness of Time, till gradual Advances, and particularly a long Disuse of False Worship which the Babylonish Captivity seems to have purged them from, had rendred them capable of these, as well as many other rich, and till then hidden Treasures of Divine Knowledge.

II. One Word or Two to shew these Doctrines not repugnant to the Natural Reason of the *Greeks*, and then I have done.

Now it might, I think, suffice to say with regard to the *Trinity*, that, The Nature of God surpassing all Humane Comprehension, we cannot precisely determine, and are therefore extremely rash in pronouncing, any thing to be a Contradiction in this Matter. Nothing less than a perfect Understanding of the Subject in debate, being sufficient to form such a Peremptory Judgment upon.

But I reckon it a farther Advantage to this Doctrine, that some very Learned Heathens have made approaches to it; under the Names of *One or Good, Mind or Cause, and Soul*, sometimes called the *Soul of the World*, at other times more accurately the *Soul above the World*: The same have been again distinguished by *Infinite Goodness, Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Love*. But these Distinctions

ons are not made to imply Three different Principles, but as united in One common Principle or universal Cause. The First of these was said to be the Root or Source derived from none, the Second to be derived from the First, the Third from the other Two. To each of these also a part was by those Philosophers assigned in the production of the World; To the *First* that of being the Original and First mover; To the *Second* that of the Architect or Contriver; To the *Third* that of the Artificer, Former, or Giver of Life. But still all these they affirm'd to have but One Operation, and all things to be produced by the common Consent of the Three. In a Word, the Two latter were declared Necessary Emanations from the First, Of the same Eternity and Excellence; And in the midst of Paganism, These thus Three, and thus One, were carefully distinguished from all those Inferior Created Gods, which were then Objects of Worship.

It cannot I confess be pretended, that all the School of *Pythagoras* or *Plato* have been thus accurate, or set this Matter in so good a light; 'Tis certain there is great confusion among them, and Notions very different from each other. What these Corruptions were, and when, and how (most probably) they grew, is largely discussed by a very learned (*k*) Country-man of our own. In the mean while it seems by no means credible, that even those piercing Wits should go thus far by the Strength of their own Reason. They are rather thought beholding for it to Tradition, derived from the *Ægyptians* (likely) and which they had from the *Hebrews*. And if in many things they wrote improperly, the less explicit Revelations heretofore, even to those *Hebrews* themselves, the distant and imperfect conveyance of what was thus but dark at the very first Hand; The Itch of Improving

(*k*) Dr.
Cudworth's
Intellect.
System.
Chap. iv.



ving or adding out of their own Head, and the want of Scripture to let them right when they thought irregularly, will account for this and more Obscurity and Diversity of Opinions, in a Question so very remote from common Apprehensions. The use I am at present making of them however is this, that, whether an Invention of their own, or whether a Tradition from others, such Notions of God could never have met with that Entertainment and Appobation they did, had those renowned Sages conceived a Threefold Subistence in One Divine Essence to be that Impossibility, Contradiction and Nonsense, which some have since so roundly charged it with. The more cause have we to admire the Wisdom of that Providence, which, by these previous tho' imperfect Notices, made way for a more favourable reception of his Gospel among the Wisest Heathens; The more have Those bold Men to be ashamed, who, under a clearer Light and expresse Declarations from Heaven, explode and deride that Mystery as a Reproach to Revealed, which so many great Names heretofore esteemed the noblest part of Natural Religion.

Indeed if this Matter be well look'd into, these loud Complaints are applied in the wrong place: For they do not so much affect the Doctrine it self, as the unwary because often too bold and fanciful Explanations of it. 'Tis certain, The first Christians were less accurate in their Expressions before the *Arrian* and following Heresies gave occasion for considering this Article more closely, and settling it more punctually. And, even when this was done, Men ill disposed stuck not to draw false Consequences, from Forms made use of, not to mean exactly what they do in common Speech, but such as, in a Case of this Nature, were of Necessity to be used, because no better could be found. But those who take these

these Cautions along with them, and are content to be wise according to that which is written; They who distinguish the Revelations of God from the Notions of Men, and do not draw Consequences from a Rigorous Sense of Words, which they never were in this Case designed to carry, will find themselves eased of all that can pretend to shock their Reason. When we say that there be Three Persons in God, we do not mean that they are like Three Persons among Men, who have different Wills and Operations; But we call them so, because we know not how better to distinguish the different Relations in which Father Son and Holy Ghost subsist, than by calling God who sustains this Threefold Capacity Three Persons, though still these be One and the same Will, One and the same Operation, One and the same Essence. We say these are infinitely One, they must be so. For God can be but One: We say they are Equal, they must be so, for God is infinite Perfection, and this can be but One, and can admit of no Degrees. The Difference therefore is not in the Substance, but in the Communication of that Substance. And thus (by Allusion still to those Relations here below) the First Person is the Father, the Second begotten of his Substance a Son, the Third proceeding from the other Two the Holy Ghost. Regarded thus, we can conceive a Priority of Order in them, and see why our Saviour should say, *My Father is greater than I*, as the Cause is more worthy than the Effect. But still here can be no Priority of time, for a necessary Cause is not before its necessary effect: Nor is there any Separate Existence here, as there is in Father and Son among Men; and therefore thus we see again, why our Lord should say *I and my Father are One*; The Father, Son and Holy Ghost then are Three, considered only in their Personal Capacity and in relation to each other; but otherwise they

they are One, entirely and indivisibly One, considered in common and as God. And therefore here can be no Contradiction, because they are never said to be Three and One in the same Respect. Nor does this make Three Gods, any more than the Sun the Beam and the Splendor make Three Suns; or the Root the Stock and the Tree, Three Trees; Or the Spring the Stream and the Vapour Three Waters: For with such Resemblances as these (for want of better) I have the Example both of Philosophers and Fathers for explaining their Sence of that Unity of Substance with that threefold Distinction of Subsistence, which they conceived to be in God.

Then, *Lastly*, For the Incarnation of the Son, what is there in this repugnant to Natural Reason? Did we assert a Conversion of the Godhead into Man, that indeed would imply a Change in that Being which we could have no just Idea of, did we suppose it capable of Change: Or did we hold a Confusion of Substance, this would imply such a Mixture of both Natures as is inconceivable Matter and Spirit, Mortal and Immortal, Creature and Creator, would thus be jumbled together; must produce, if it were possible, a Compound resulting out of, but properly it self neither God nor Man. Did we assert him to consist of two Persons, this would infer two Christs, two Mediators; Whereas the Nature of Man was here assumed by the Son of God, united to his own Divine Nature, not by any Multiplication or Conjunction of Persons, but by the same Person subsisting now, in a manner different from that in which he subsisted before. And what contradiction is there in all this? Is not that Being which we confess Almighty, able to choose, and to effect any mode of Existence which his own Wisdom sees fit to take upon him? And, if he choose Humanity, may not this
Humane

Humane Nature taken to the Divine make as truly One Person, as the Immaterial Soul and the Fleshly Body constitute one Man? 'Tis true, One is full of Miracle, and altogether extraordinary, The Other is Natural and Common; But Who made this to be natural and common? Omnipotence will account for the former, and nothing less than that can account for the Latter. But that's not all. For the Pagans (*l*) themselves had (*tis* ^{(1) *Quæst.*} plain) notions of this kind, and pretend to have believed ^{*Alneran.*} Instances somewhat like it. (*Which* ^{*Lib. ii.*} not to mention ^{*Cap. xiii.*} now) I shall only remind you, that the forward Zeal of the Men of *Lystra* to Sacrifice to *Barnabas* and *Paul*, is an Evidence that they apprehended neither Contradiction nor Nonsense in believing that upon some very Solemn occasions their Gods might and did come down to them in the likeness of Men.

I am sensible I have exceeded, and therefore I only add, that, if we will be satisfied with thinking and speaking as the Word of God hath directed us, we shall, in both the Mysteries now treated of, find much, very much to exercise our Wonder, but nothing at all that offers violence to our Reason. They are the *deep things of God*, and therefore we cannot expect to comprehend them; but they are such as the Spirit *which searcheth all things* even the deepest things of God hath revealed, and therefore we never act more rationally than when we believe them.

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Human Nature taken to the Divine make as truly One Person, as the Immortal Soul and the Fleishly Body constitute one Man? This true One is full of Miracle, and altogether extraordinary. The Other is Natural and Common; But Who made this to be natural and common? Omnipotence will account for the former, and nothing less than that can account for the latter. But that's not all. For the Pagans (V) themselves had (as I have said) notions of this kind, and pretend to have believed instances somewhat like it. (Which not to mention now) I shall only remind you, that the forward Zeal of the Men of Asser to sacrifice to Baal and Pan, is an Evidence that they approached within Cartridge of Non-sense in believing that upon some very solemn occasions their Gods might and did come down to them in the likeness of Men.

I am sensible I have exceeded, and therefore I only add, that if we will be satisfied with thinking and speaking as the Word of God hath directed us, we shall in both the Mysteries now treated of, find much, very much to excite our Wonder, but nothing at all that offers violence to our Reason. They are the deep things of God, and therefore we cannot expect to comprehend them; but they are such as the Spirit which searches all things even the deepest things of God hath revealed, and therefore we never act more rationally than when we believe them.

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